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## General Comment

[Edited by Gilbert Campbell Scoggin, The University of Missouri.]

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Professor T. G. Tucker, who since 1885 has held the chair of classical philology at the University of Melbourne, has recently resigned. He is well known for his editions of Aeschylus, his *Life in Ancient Athens*, and his *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul*.

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Mr. J. A. K. Thomson has been appointed lecturer on the classics at Harvard University. Mr. Thomson was a student at Pembroke College, Oxford, and he has taught at St. Andrew's and at Glasgow. He is the author of *Studies in the Odyssey*, published by the Clarendon Press in 1914, and of a volume of very delightful essays dealing with classical themes.

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The *Journal of Educational Psychology* for April, 1919, contains an editorial on "The Classics" by Mr. J. Carleton Bell. It is generally recognized that one inevitable result of the war has been an attempt to examine anew all educational values. The introduction of the S.A.T.C. into our colleges ended in dismal failure, and, strange as it may seem to those who are familiar with the conditions under which our work was carried on, this failure has furnished the enemies of the traditional subjects and methods a chance to attack the collegiate system. The truth is, of course, that the traditional machinery was thrown out of gear and some of the traditional subjects were neglected. It seems unfair to claim that this marked failure in connection with the S.A.T.C. is to be attributed to our obsolete college methods when, for the moment, traditional methods and subjects were thrust aside. One thing is clear, and that is that colleges everywhere are making an effort to meet popular demands, and the movement against the classical requirement has been accelerated. In several of our oldest institutions this requirement has been radically changed. Mr. Bell, who evidently is no friend of the classics, seems to point out the present situation with satisfaction, and somewhat ironically indulges in the "hope" that some defenders of the classics "may be induced by their ardor to make statistical and experimental studies in the processes involved in learning Latin and Greek, that the store of our knowledge in educational psychology may be enriched. Perhaps they may succeed in showing us what there is in the technical study of Latin vocabulary and sentence structure that is so remarkably liberalizing and humanizing." It may well be doubted that any obligation rests upon classical teachers as such to make experiments as to the psychological factors involved in learning Latin; and the ill odor at the present time surrounding statistics can be removed by those alone who pin their faith to such

things. Statistics fill the "fools' paradise" of pseudoscience and charlatanry and are apt to prejudice an honest cause. Mr. Bell rightly urges that an attempt be continued for working out courses for school and colleges, and for placing before students "opportunity to come into contact with" biological, social, and political history of the human race, "including what has been contributed by the Greeks and Romans." Furthermore the student should be trained to use his knowledge in solving contemporary problems.

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In a volume entitled *Letters to Teachers*, Professor Hartley B. Alexander, of the department of philosophy at the University of Nebraska, has brought into accessible form numerous papers on educational themes contributed to various periodicals. Among timely topics, treated in very pleasing fashion, are: "The Curriculum," "The Humanities," "History," "Nature and Science," "Crafts and Vocations," "The School System," "The Teacher's Profession," and "Foreign Language Study." Professor Alexander does not hesitate to say that Latin should be the first language to be studied at school and he gives several good reasons for his belief: "First, Latin is the key to more centuries of the world's history, and, on the whole, to a greater range of literature (historical and political as well as imaginative) than is in any other language. Second, Latin is a key to the understanding of fundamental English for a majority of our words and forms of expression are directly or indirectly of Latin origin. Third—and by no means least—Latin is the best taught of languages, a single year of it giving far more in the way of returns than is to be obtained from the study of any other foreign tongue." Another advantage possessed by Latin over other languages is the fact that it opens up to the student two of the most important epochs in human history, "the period of pagan and imperial Rome and the great period of medieval Christianity." Among modern foreign tongues he gives French first place, as it succeeded Latin as the language of diplomacy and polite literature. "From the point of view of literary art, French is, with Latin, a rival for the second place after Greek; and as a language of great prose, in spite of the fact that the greatest of prose writers, Plato, was a Greek, French is more important than Greek." Yet he insists that Greek should be accessible in the high schools for all students who may have literary gifts and tastes. "Viewed from every angle the foreign languages best worth cultivating, for the sake of literature, are the classical and Romance tongues, and in particular, Latin, French, and Greek," this being the order in which he would recommend them to a student asking for advice. Next to these he would place German. He believes that we should not teach language for the sake of discipline or of philology, but only for the sake of making readers. He also suggests that the history of science should be introduced in the first year of the college course, preliminary to the specialized laboratory courses in which many students lose sight of the broader relations existing among the various special fields that are likely to obscure one's vision of the unity of knowledge.

All who are interested in the history of classical culture will welcome the *Census of Fifteenth Century Books Owned in America* which has just been issued as a very attractive octavo with entries filling 245 pages. I have already referred to the instalments that were appearing in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* from April to December of last year; and the present *Census* is a collected issue of that material to which numerous additions have been made. The material for this work which had been accumulating for many years was intrusted to a committee of the Bibliographical Society of America, of which the chairman is Dr. George Parker Winship, of the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library, Harvard University. Dr. Winship supervised the preparation of the work for the printer, and he has contributed a valuable introduction which gives an interesting history of the origin of the work, together with the gradual steps leading to its final issue. We may congratulate ourselves that the *Census* was placed in the hands of such a competent editor, whose scholarly knowledge of books and whose bibliographical skill are widely recognized at home and abroad. The books catalogued embrace some 13,200 copies under more than 6,640 titles, and they are scattered among 169 public libraries and 246 private owners. Mr. George W. Robinson, secretary of the Harvard Graduate School, from his unusual knowledge of medieval publications has added to the accuracy of the descriptions by correcting a good many dates originally taken from "sources thought to be reliable." The work was printed at the New York Library and many persons have contributed to its production.

The titles of the books are entered in the order used by Hain in his *Repertorium*, those unknown to Hain being made to conform as closely as possible to his scheme. The alphabetical arrangement and the spelling of authors' names follow Hain. The title is given in the briefest possible manner and the place of publication appears in its English form. The date of publication is given as it stands in the book itself, with the modern equivalent immediately following in parentheses.

It is a matter of no small gratification to learn that copies of most of the *principes* of classical authors printed in the fifteenth century may now be consulted in America. In the case of Greek authors many of course do not fall within this period and so are excluded. The first Greek book to be printed, Laskaris' Greek Grammar (Milan, 1476), is represented by a single copy in a private library. There are no fewer than seven copies of the Florentine Homer (1488) in this country and fifteen copies of the Aldine Aristophanes (1498). The first book to bear a printed date, the Mainz Psalter (1457), is not listed, and presumably no copy is to be found in this country. Of the very rare Ferrara Seneca Tragicus, however, two copies are reported, one from New York and the other from California. The finest copy of this book that I ever examined is the Grenville copy in the British Museum. Its date is unknown. The census gives it as *circa* 1480. It is sometimes given as 1488; but some years ago when examining the copy in the Cambridge University Library I pointed

out to Mr. Charles Sayle that it contained a manuscript note involving the date 1488 and he plausibly suggested that this was the ultimate source of that ascribed date. There are listed three copies of the Subiaco Lactantius (1465), the first printed book to contain a more or less complete alphabet of Greek; also three copies of the *Officia et Paradoxa* of Cicero (Mainz, 1465), a book containing Greek type, and sometimes regarded as earlier than the Lactantius. But Proctor, in his beautiful treatise on *The Printing of Greek in the Fifteenth Century*, points out that a second edition of the Cicero appeared in February, 1466, and as the Lactantius is definitely dated October 30, 1465, it seems hardly probable that the Cicero could be later.

The economies imposed by war times required that all reasonable brevity be employed in the descriptions. But individual copies often possess interesting features, and the provenance of early books is always interesting and often of value to a collector. For instance, I know that the copy of Celsus in the Prime Collection of Williams College contains a very beautiful miniature, in gold and colors, of a scribe (probably the author) reading his manuscript; and this particular copy belonged to Michael Woodhull. It might have been useful, also, if the particular edition had been indicated as the princeps, where such is known to be the case.

That all books owned in this country are here listed is not to be supposed. Several unusual private libraries were discovered at the last moment and others no doubt remain hidden. As Mr. Winship suggests, a continued search should be made: "The institution which undertakes to do this as a part of its regular service will add more to its own equipment and reputation, at less outlay, than can be secured in any other way known to the writer."

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"The New Comedy of Errors" is the title of an article contributed to the October *Educational Review* by Mr. Robert E. Moritz, whose text is a quotation from Goldsmith: "Every absurdity has a champion to defend it, for error is always talkative." For some time past, those teachers who spoke of "mental training" have often been reminded by their colleagues that this was an exploded myth. They were told that the mental faculties could not be trained because there were no such faculties; that "basis of content" was the only scientific basis for education. Such statements were supported by references to certain high authorities in education who assailed the doctrine of formal discipline and who maintained that such views betrayed sad ignorance of the great progress made of late in the science of education. They were likely to show impatience at the mere suggestion of "discipline." In the words of one of these authorities, "We shall not learn to think clearly about education until we cease to becloud ourselves by using the word discipline." Such statements have led many teachers to suppose that the impossibility of formal discipline had been proved by reliable scientific experiments. Some opponents of the traditional subjects have even claimed that the doctrine of discipline was never thought of by the humanistic educators until they were driven to it as a final resort.

Such is the charge brought by E. C. Moore and Monroe, and such belief is assumed by Flexner and Thorndike. Yet, as Mr. Moritz points out, this theory of education was in fact maintained by Isocrates in the fourth century B.C. and has been the basis of education throughout the centuries. See Isocrates in his speech *On the Antidosis*, and Jebb's discussion at the opening of the second volume of his *Attic Orators*. Flexner's aversion to anything traditional is well known; he even has the audacity to try to force the burden of proof upon the defenders of the old instead of adducing proof to support his own theories. Such a claim "bids us to disregard Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, and hosts of others and defer to the superior judgment of the Flexners, Moores, O'Sheas, and their kindred of the present day." The author points out that tradition is the result of experience and unless clearly disproved may be relied upon; the experience of the race is far safer for guidance than disputed theories. Another claim often made by "scientific" educators is that the theory of mental discipline contradicts certain facts of psychology. As Flexner says, "It would have been fortunate for education if attention had been devoted to rooting out this pernicious doctrine that the faculties can be trained simply by pointing out that no such faculties exist." Now whatever theories about mental discipline may have been advanced, mental discipline is a fact unperturbed by theories. If mental discipline is not consistent with certain theories about mental discipline, then so much the worse for those theories. Then again, some of the modern educators have given a meaning to the term "mental discipline" never held by a rational person. They have sometimes unfairly held that the disciplinarians teach that any mental activity develops the mind equally in all directions; for example, that learning tables of logarithms will develop power for writing lyric verse. This leads imperceptibly to the claim that the disciplinarians hold that all subjects, if well taught, have equal disciplinary value. No charge could be more untrue, for it is the disciplinarians who have been insisting that nothing can take the place of mathematics, and that Latin and Greek are of greater educational value than modern languages. That one subject is as good as another was first urged by those who represented the new subjects clamoring for admission into the curriculum. In conclusion, the author shows that the theory of mental discipline has not been overthrown, although many writers on education have repeatedly said that it was. Even the moderns are divided in counsel among themselves. Many opponents of the traditional theory are not so loud in their denunciations and have grown more moderate in their claims. Some have even conceded, with Colvin and Bagley, that "there is every reason to believe that his (the student's) mind will be 'trained' somewhat as the older advocates of the doctrine of formal discipline contended." This article gives a very good summary of the points at issue and arguments advanced, and it shows that truly an amazing amount of error has been trumpeted abroad and eagerly caught up by many teachers who have assumed that they were accepting doctrines incontestably proved.